



The Open University

## Mind the Gap

Developing systems thinking in practice at the workplace

Martin Reynolds  
Rupesh Shah  
Elaine Wedlock

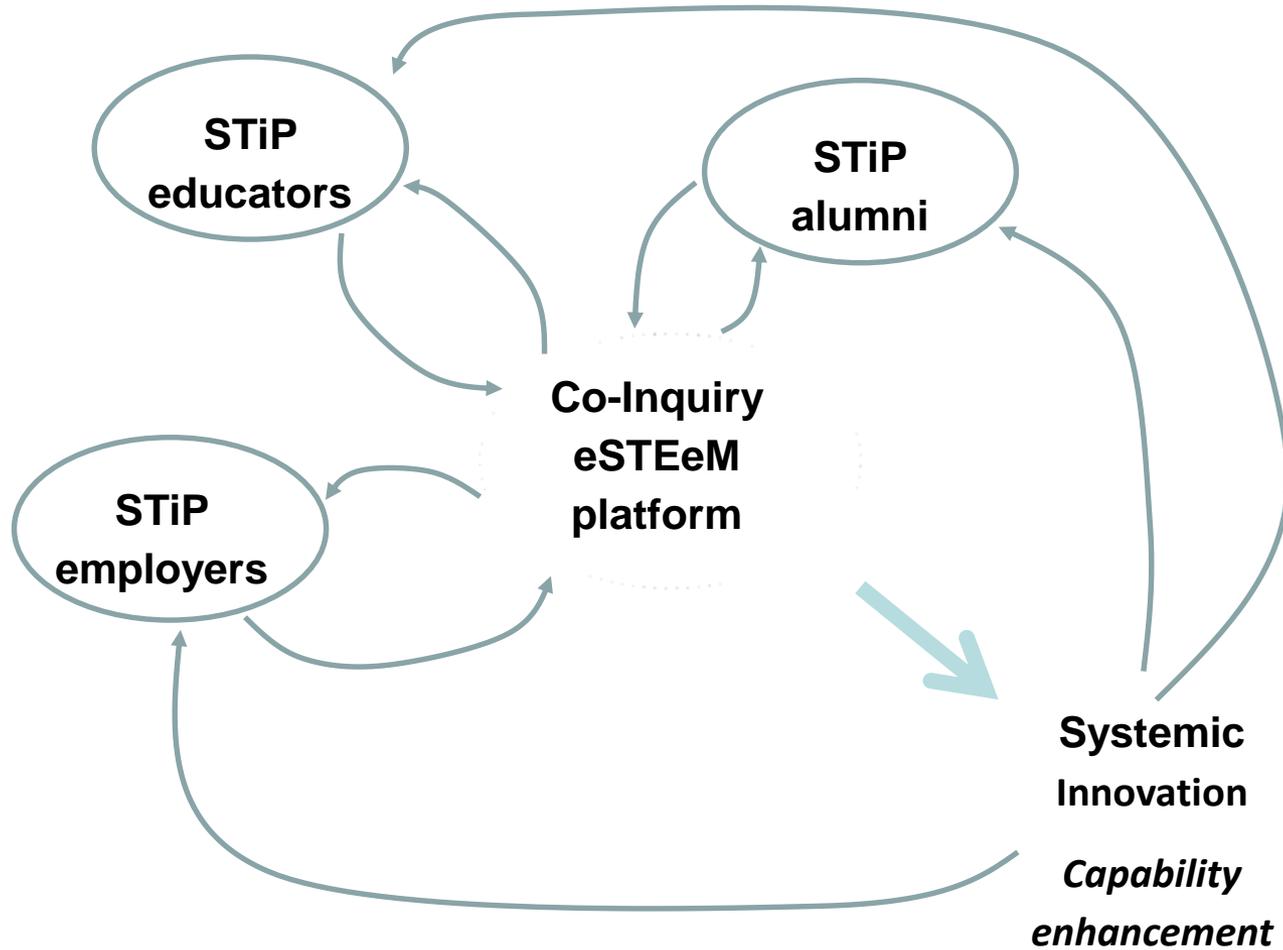
with

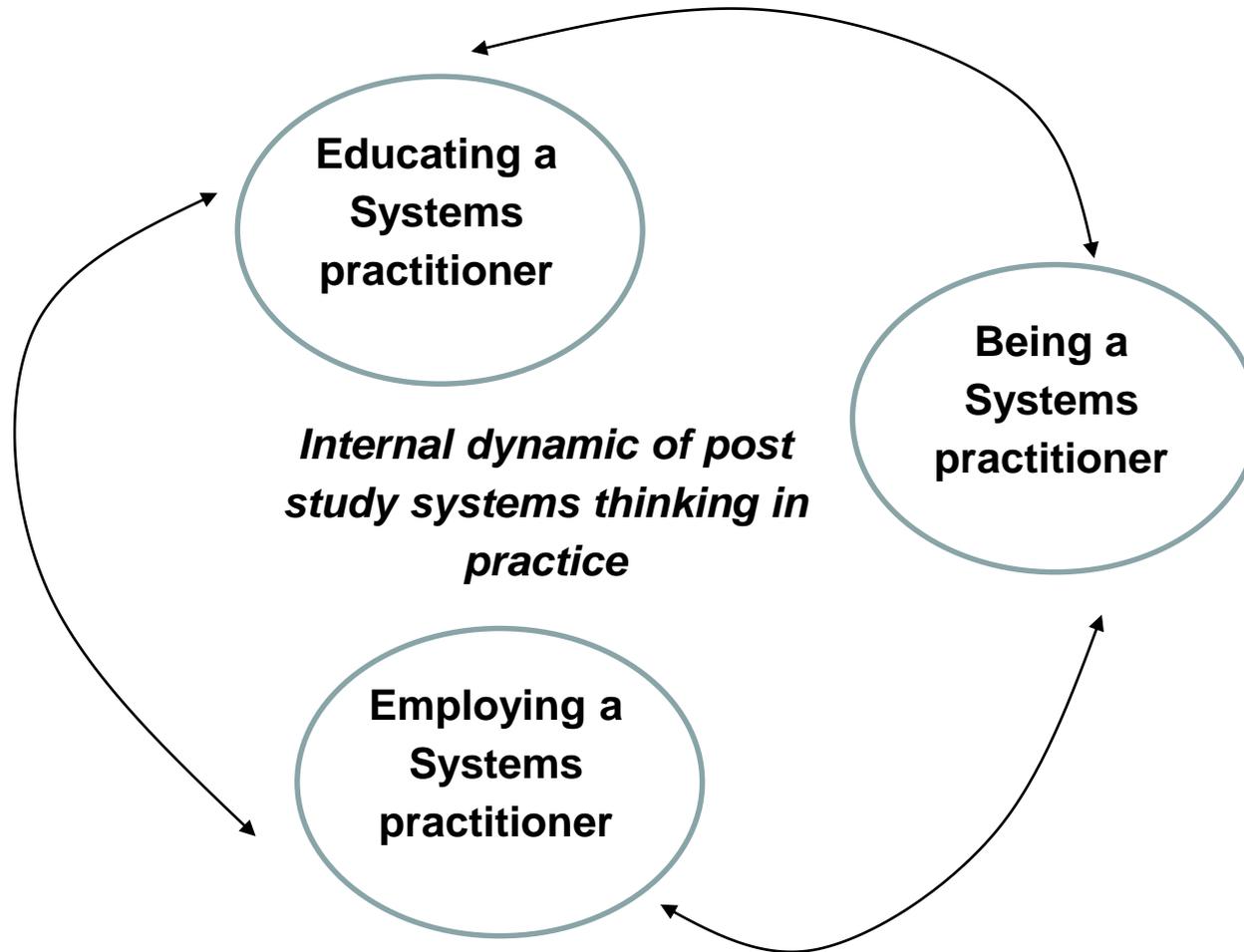
Chris Blackmore  
Ray Ison

Applied Systems Thinking in Practice (ASTiP) Group

**Workshop**  
**OU Regional Office**  
**London**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015**





## Two questions of systems practice

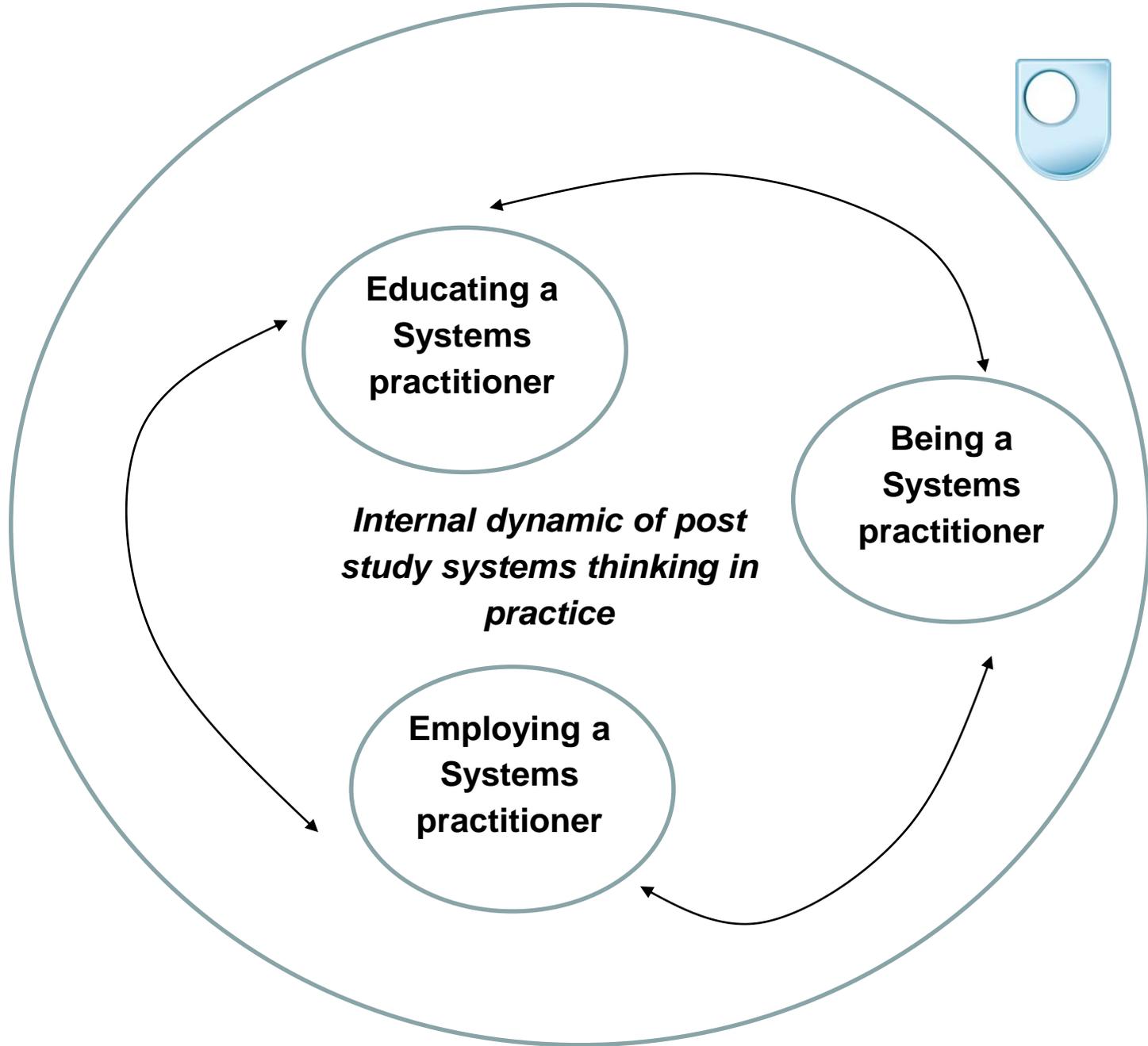


**1. What is your experience of the dynamic?**

**2. How might it be improved?**

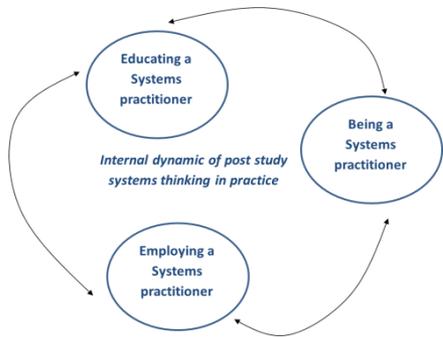
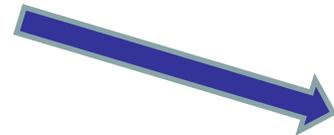


**Phase 1  
and Phase  
2 interviews**

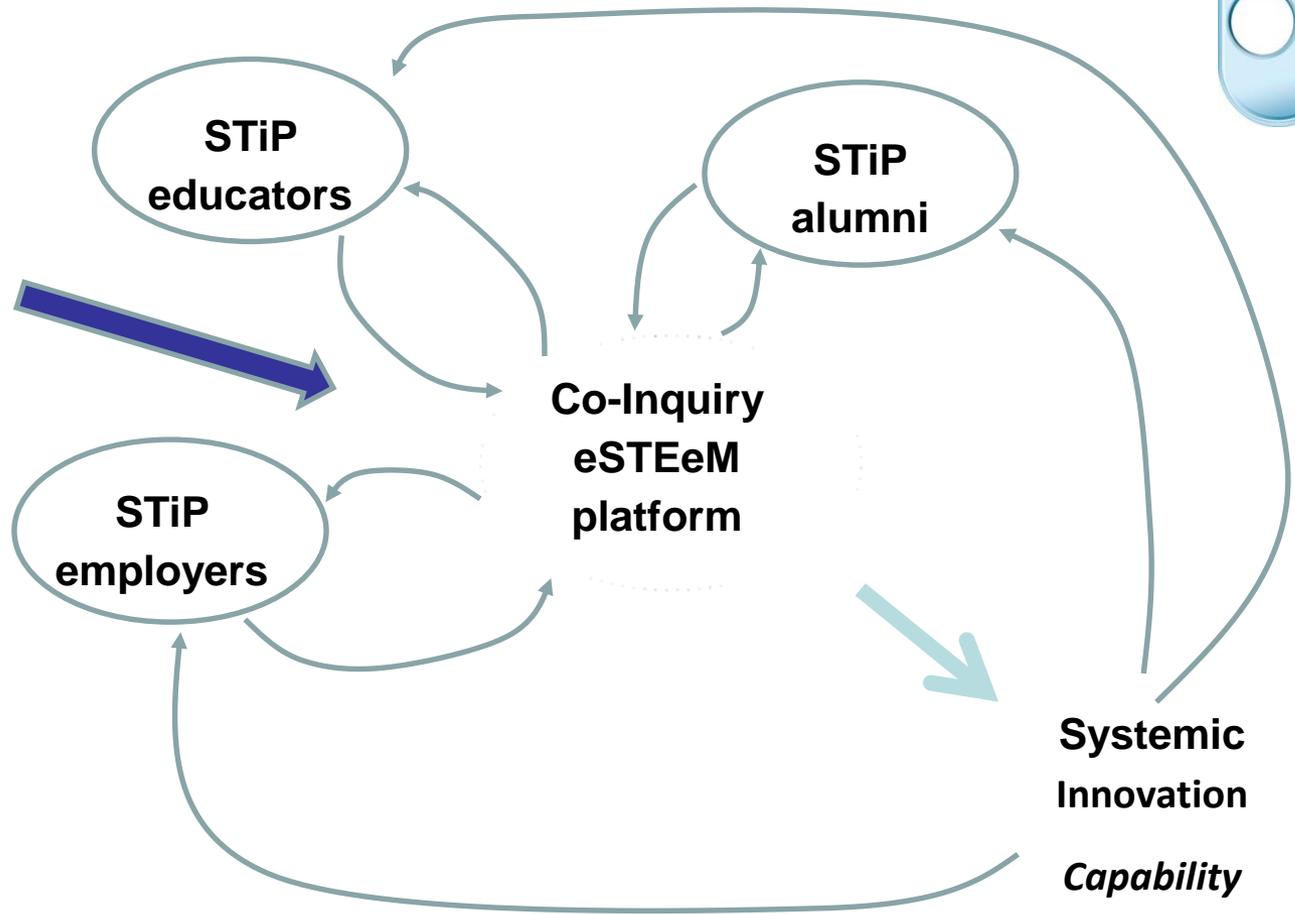




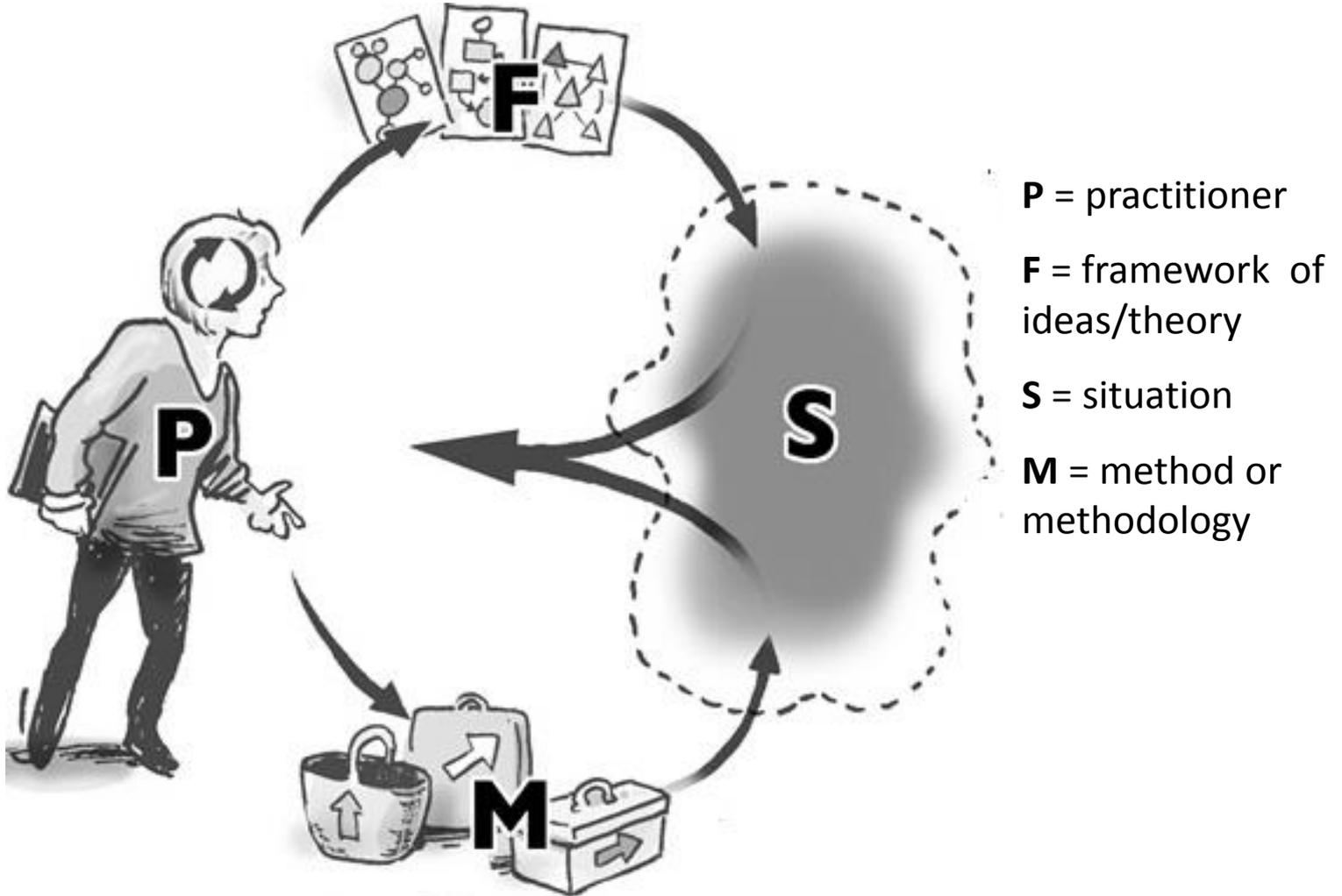
**Phase 1  
and Phase  
2 interviews**



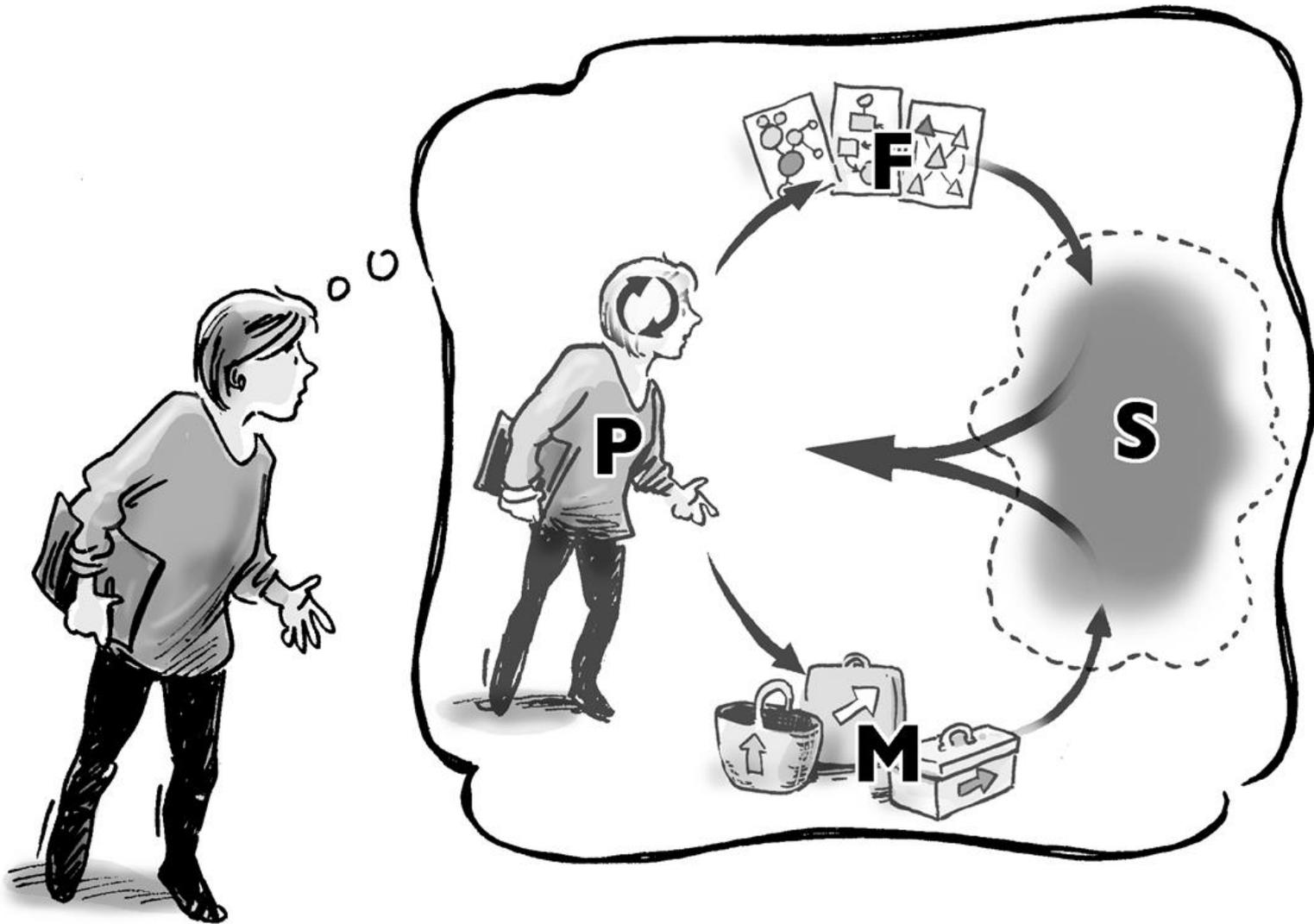
**Systemic  
Innovation**  
*Capability  
enhancement*



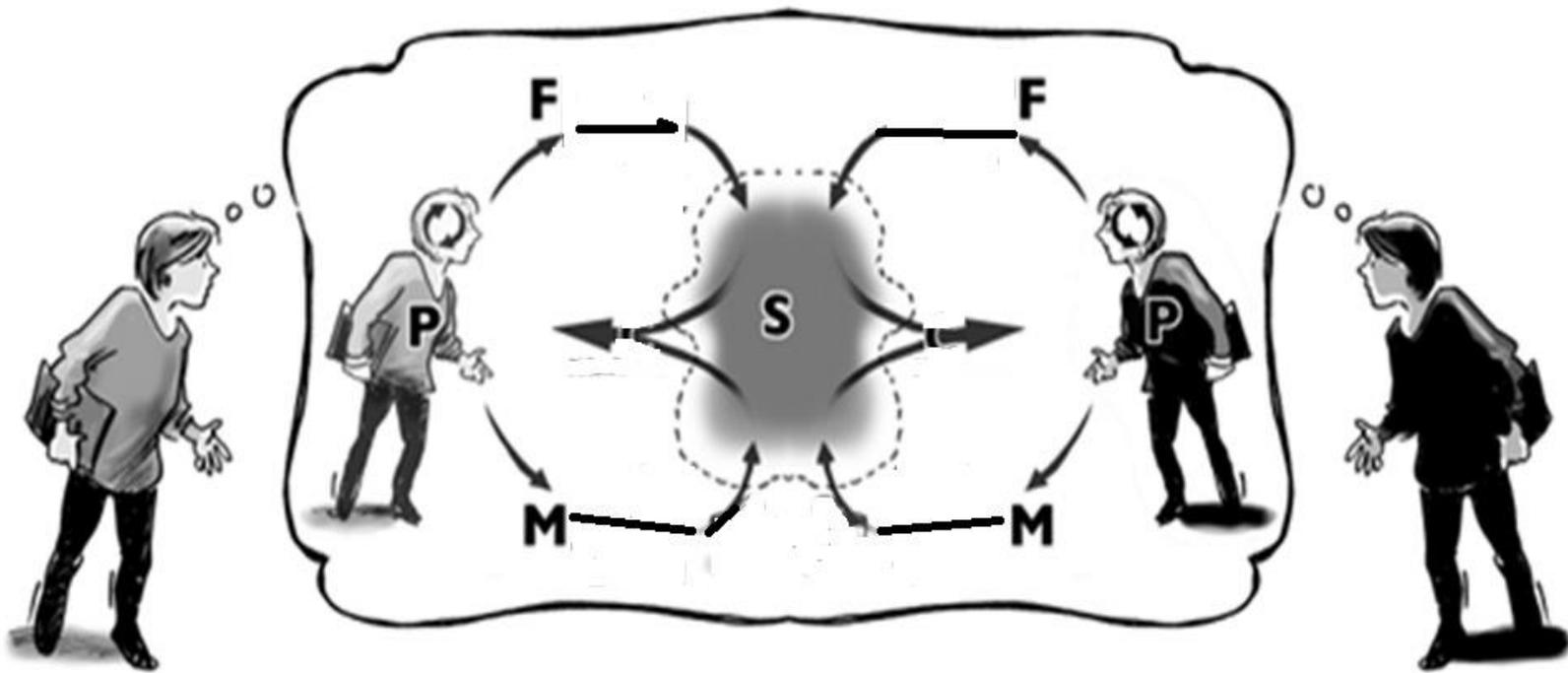
# Understanding practice 1



# Understanding practice 2



# Understanding practice 3



# Possible questions for each of 3 cycles

(i) being a systems practitioner

(ii) educating a systems practitioner

(iii) employing a systems practitioner

1. P/F: what change in thinking and understanding might enable better appreciation of systems practice?
2. P/M: What change in practices (tools, techniques, methods) might enable better appreciation of systems practice?
3. S/P: What institutional arrangements might be experienced as enabling by a systems practitioner?
4. ? What on-going inquiry questions suggest themselves?

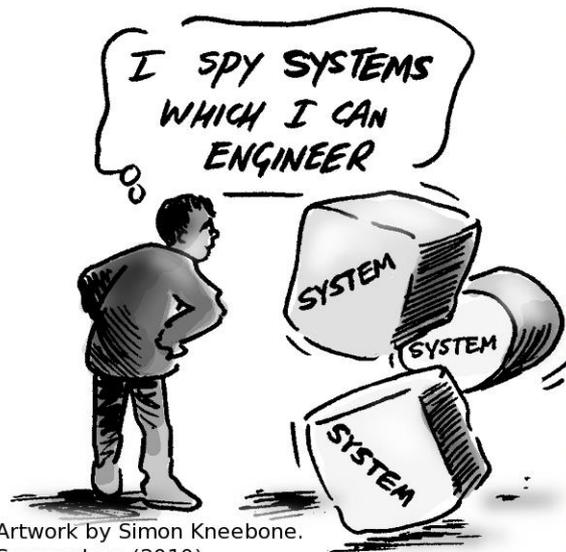
**P** = practitioner

**F** = framework of ideas/theory

**S** = situation

**M** = method or methodology

# A story of an alumnus



Artwork by Simon Kneebone.  
Source: Ison (2010)



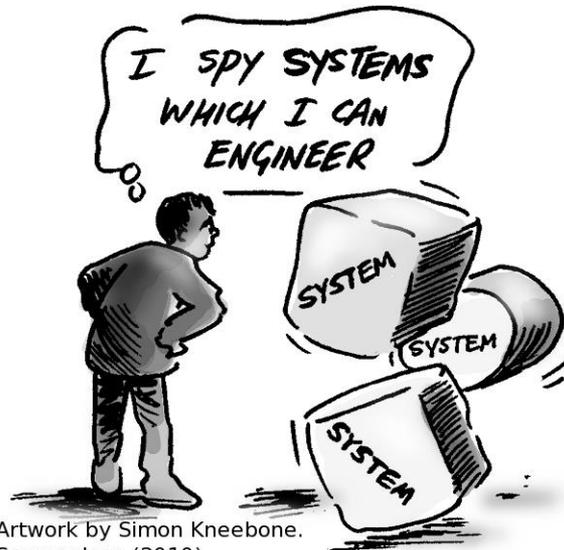
Courtesy of  
Arwen Bailey

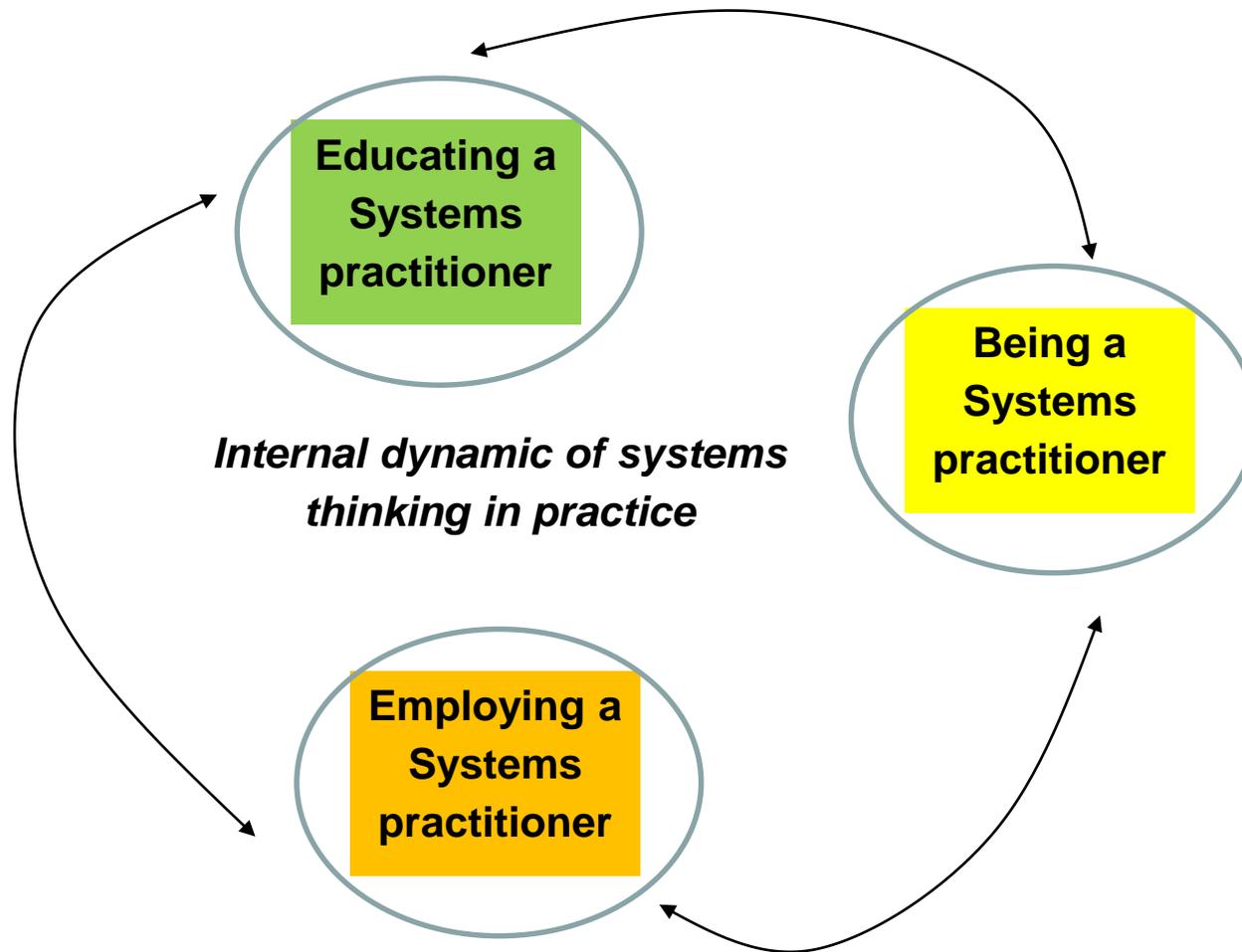


Artwork by Simon Kneebone. Source: Ison (2010)

# Letting go from 'study' entailed...

- Less opportunities to talk 'systems jargon'
- No 'structure' to guide further learning
- Taking purposeful action to use what I'd learned – can only go so far without introducing 'it' to others







# Systems Thinking in Practice

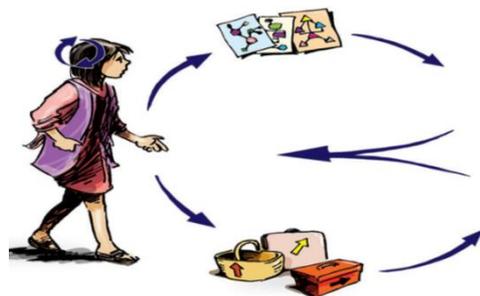
Postgraduate qualifications from the Open University



2 Core modules part-time study - each with 6 months:

Thinking strategically: systems tools for managing change  
*TU811 – 30 credits*

Managing systemic change: inquiry, action and interaction  
*TU812 – 30 credits*



C72

Postgraduate Certificate in Systems Thinking in Practice 60 credits		
Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
TU811 (30 credits) + TU812 (30 credits)	TU811 (30 credits) + 30 credits from other relevant postgraduate modules	TU812 (30 credits) + 30 credits from other relevant postgraduate modules

E28

Postgraduate Diploma in Systems Thinking in Practice 120 credits
Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) + extra 60 credits: (2 x 30 credit modules or 1 x 60 credit module) choose from relevant postgraduate modules; must include TU811 and TU812 if you have not already completed both of these

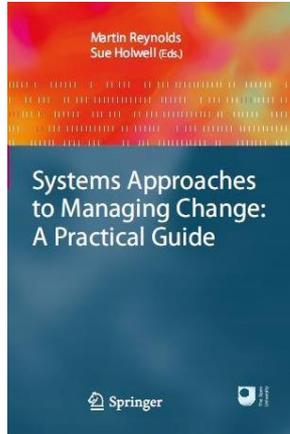
F47

MSc in Systems Thinking in Practice 180 credits	
Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits) + extra 60 credits from:	
Professional route	Research route
T847 (30 credits) + 30 credits from relevant postgraduate modules not already completed for the Diploma	T802 (60 credits)

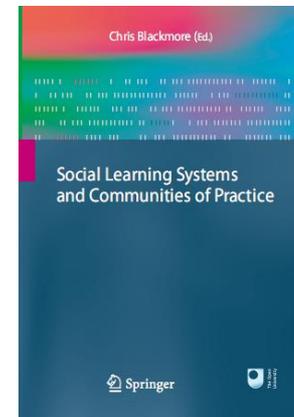
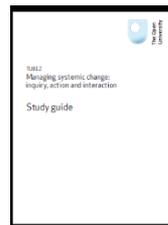
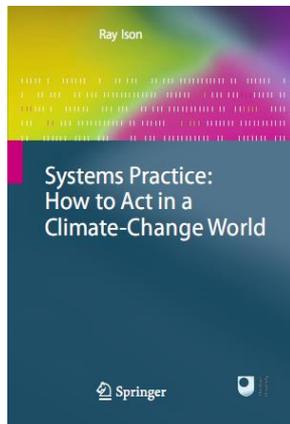


**TU811**  
**30 credits**

**Thinking strategically:  
systems tools for managing change**



**Systems Thinking in Practice**  
**Postgraduate programme**



**TU812**  
**30 credits**

**Managing systemic change:  
Inquiry, action and interaction**



# Systems Thinking in Practice

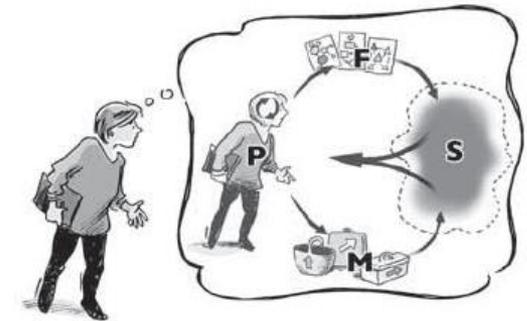
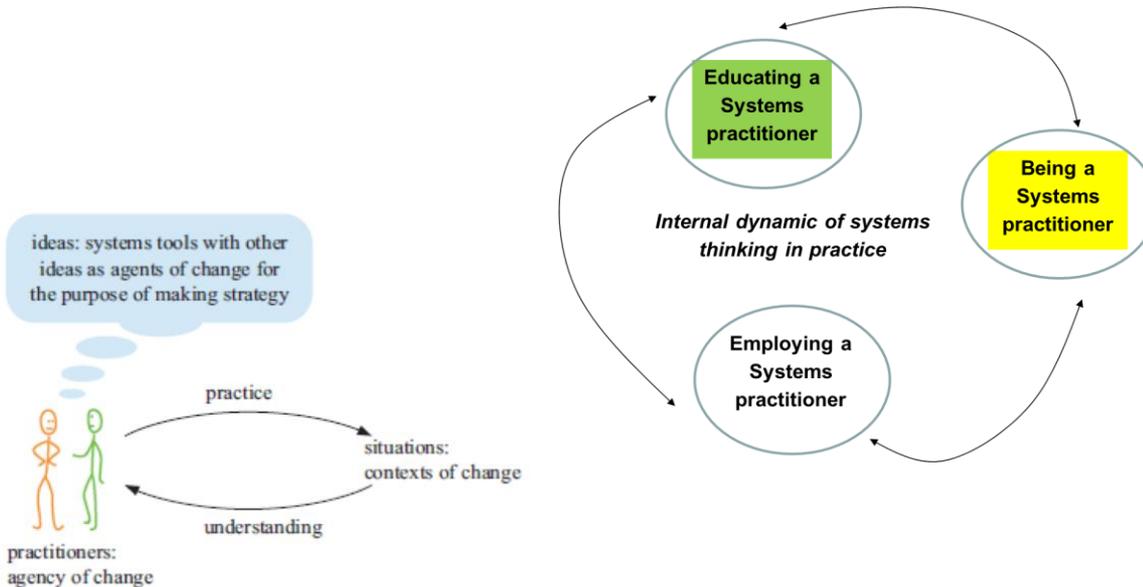
Educator... Systems practitioner dynamic

## 1. Developing systemic understanding through systematic pedagogic practice... Huh?

TU811  
Thinking strategically



TU812  
Managing systemic change



*Tools from 5 systems approaches Thinking in adaptive practice...Bricoleur (bricolage)*

*Systemic action learning (2<sup>nd</sup> order cybernetics) ...Juggler (juggling)*



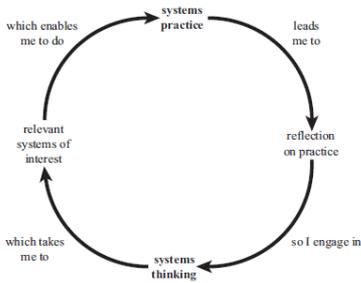
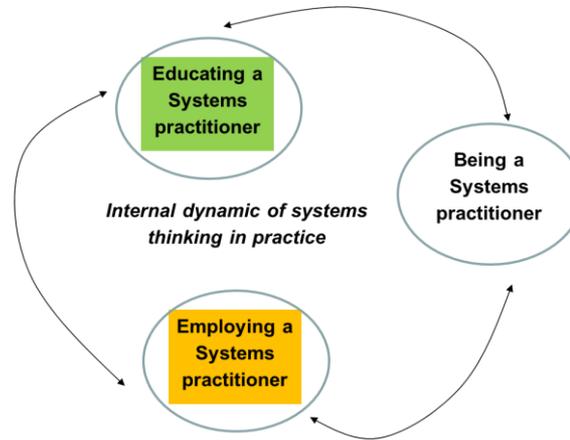
# Systems Thinking in Practice

Educator... Employer dynamic

## 2. Developing active pedagogy using the workplace

**TU811**  
Thinking strategically

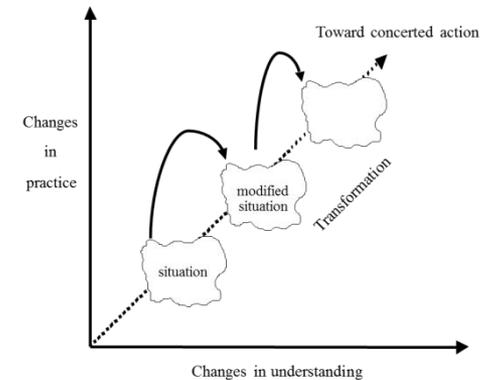
**TU812**  
Managing systemic change



1. 5 systems approaches
2. online critical reflection in use of tools

In an area of (work) practice chosen by individual students

*Reflective practice*



*Social learning/ landscapes of practice*



# Systems Thinking in Practice

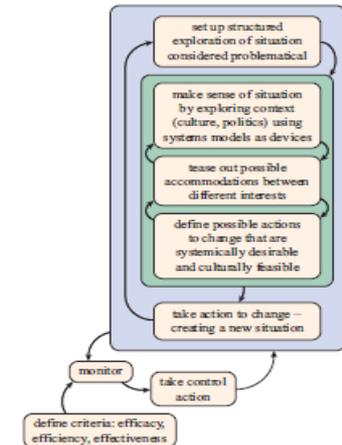
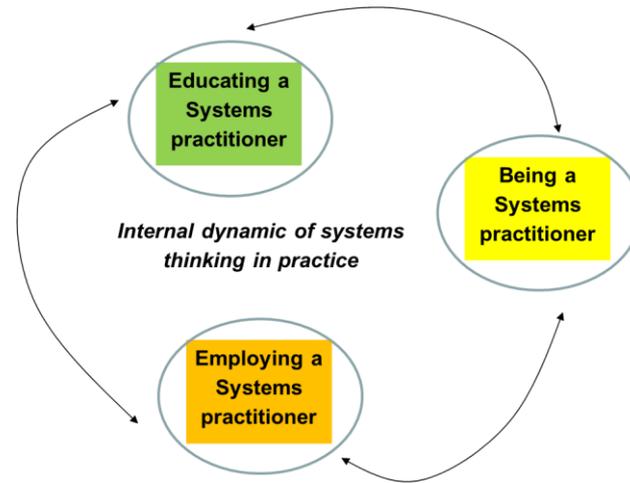
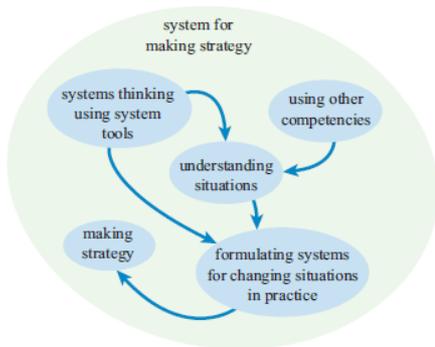
Educators....practitioners and employers

## 3. Developing design praxis (formative evaluation)

**TU811**  
Thinking strategically



**TU812**  
Managing systemic change



**Assessment based on purposeful project design based on systemic inquiry**

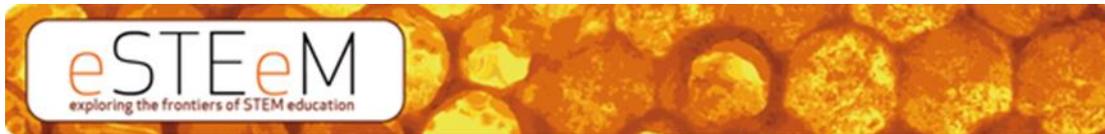
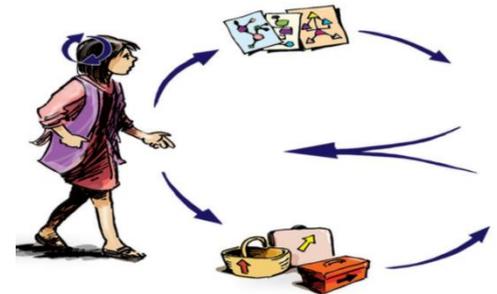
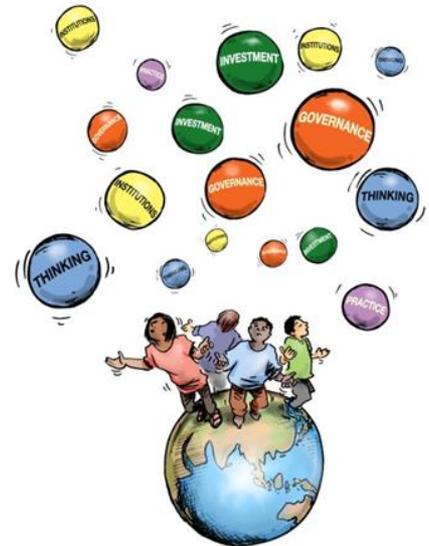


# Systems Thinking in Practice

Postgraduate qualifications from the Open University

Challenges in educating for systems thinking in practice (STiP) at the workplace

1. **Systematic teaching and systemic learning**  
(educator and systems practitioner)
2. **Active teaching and learning using the workplace**  
(educator and employer)
3. **Institutional validity of formative assessment**  
(Employer value and University values)



# Possible questions for each of 3 cycles (i) doing systems practice, (ii) educating systems practice, and (iii) employing systems practice?

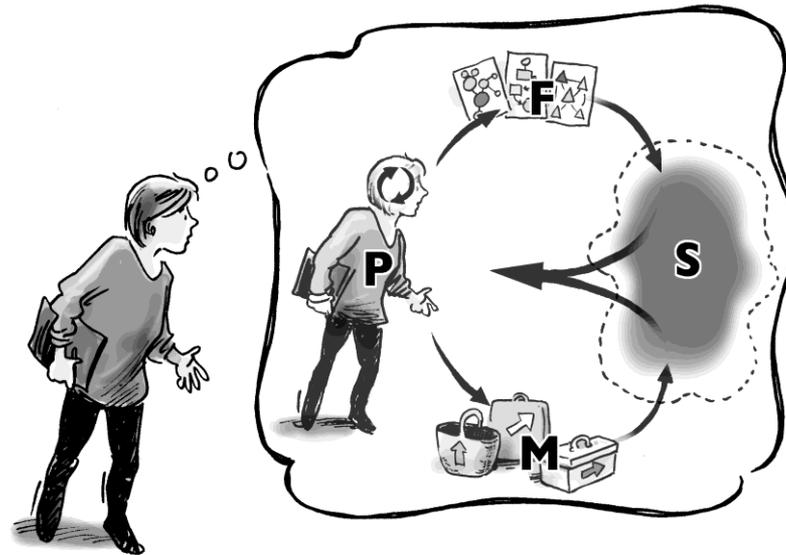


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